

4H Determination to Resist in Self-Defence.

just defence aganis all that shall persew us for the mater of religioun, and for our conscience saik, which aught not, nor may nott be subject to mortale creatures, farder than by God's worde man be able to prove that he hath power to command us." To the nobility they emphasised their determination in a separate epistle in even stronger terms. Authority, says the scribe, evidently likewise Knox himself, is God's ordinance, . and should be obeyed, but authority is not identical with the person who happens to exercise it, and its tyrannic exercise may certainly be resisted. They will not be intimidated by numbers, but even if it is a case of a thousand against ten thousand, " thei sail nocht murther the least of our brethren, but we (God assisting us) shall first committ our lyves in the handes of God for their defence." At the same time they are loth to grasp the sword, and are willing to refer the questions in dispute to the arbitration of a public disputation, which they have hitherto solicited in vain.

Divested of the theological rhetoric with which Knox overlaid it, this assertion of the principle of resistance to a tyrannic *regime* in Church and State does credit to its champions. It is easy for historians sitting in their arm-chairs to cavil and denounce. Had these same historians been threatened with the stake and the dungeon for their adhesion to their conscientious principles, and this by a ruler who represented the system of French absolutism in a country which could boast of a parliamentary constitution, and by a few domineering prelates whose lives were a disgrace to common morality, not to speak of Christianity, they would most probably have found cogent reasons for playing a different tune. We must judge of the situation as it appeared to the men engaged in a life-and-death struggle with despotism, not as it appears to these modern critics and detractors. So regarded, it is difficult to see how these men could have answered in the deferential style that might have pleased these critics, but would most certainly have undone them and their cause and chained the future to slavery to the powers that be in Church and State.

Their rhetoric was, however, thrown away on the regent, who sent D'Oysel with a force of 8,000 French and Scots to seize Perth. His progress was arrested at Auchterarder by the advance of Lords Glencairn and Ochiltree, who had quickly